

My Response to the March by the Fire Service 2 days ago in Trinidad and Tobago.

Sun/14/Apr/2019.

This is just one of the problems the Fire Service is experiencing, which my evidence based research has revealed. This year in early February, the Magistrates Court in Port of Spain, ordered all applicants for renewal of their Liquor Licenses to get Fire Prevention Approval, before the Licensing Committee (we have 8 Licensing Committee Districts here in T&T) grants their applications.

This year, about 5,000 business persons, excluding those applying for new licenses, which is a standard requirement for new applications. They neglected to inform those who applied from early January to that date and created chaos in the Court and extreme stress on the part of said early applicants, some who are still struggling to get the approval Certificate from the Court. Honest, hard working citizens paying their fees every year and putting Billions of dollars into the Government Coffers, since the sale and purchase of liquor is one of the biggest contributors to the Government coffers.

The Fire Prevention Management Space is as crowded as the Administration Space which collects the \$200.00 fee, exposing them to charges under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). The Fire Prevention Department could not address this demand in 2019 and sent preliminary approvals to the Court, pending their official visit and Certification as an approved building.

The Fire Service is under tremendous stress with the failure of the finalization of their long outstanding salary negotiations. Lack of vehicles to do the work demanded of them. Being asked to disapprove buildings for the same noncompliance they are committing and quite rightly must march to show their disapproval of the neglect by this Government.

My deceased Fire Station Officer, Egbert Berment, father, must be shedding tears for the hardship his live colleagues are experiencing and me as his son, fighting a different, but just as powerful, invisible, internal fire, seen only by the trained eye, shed similar tears for the stresses these hard working Fire Officers undergo, before going home to manage the challenges of family life, without a working EAP.

Many others wonder why crime is so rampant in our society. I do not. The Court has been making mistakes in law and fact for many years, as is the Customs and Excise Division and that concern will be addressed to the Chief Justice soon, since this year was the worst for the past 3 decades, although I have seen 2 senior citizens removed from a crowded Court Corridor, in wheelchairs a few years ago, at the Port of Spain Magistrate's Court, on the first day of the Liquor Licence Hearing, during the morning period, after they collapsed on the floor and the ambulance arrived in 20 minutes.

Sent on Face book, LinkedIn and elsewhere Sunday the 14th day of April 2019, at 2.30 am

Signed.....Donald D. Berment, Specialist HSDS, NGA, DVC.
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